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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/765,834	01/29/2004	Yoshiki Nobuto	248226US0	2367
22850	7590	05/18/2006	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			SPERTY, ARDEN B	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1771

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/765,834

Applicant(s)

NOBUTO ET AL.

Examiner

Arden B. Sperty

Art Unit

1771

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 April 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 7 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 3 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/29/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

NON-FINAL OFFICE ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of claims 1-6 in the reply filed on 4/03/06 is acknowledged. Applicant's grounds for traversal are not clear or persuasive. In the restriction requirement, the examiner set forth an alternative process resulting in the same product. Applicant has not shown that the alternative process does not provide the claimed product. The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1-2 and 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent 6767853 to Nakayama et al.

4. The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in

the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

5. The Nakayama reference teaches a fibrous substrate for artificial leather, comprising microfine fiber bundles composed of 3-50 microfine elastic fibers (A). See Abstract. The elastic fibers (A), and bundles formed therefrom, are analogous to the claimed microfine bundles (A) comprising 10 to 100 microfine finbers. The claimed microfine fibers have a fineness of 0.5 dtex or less; the analogous elastic fibers of the prior art have a fineness of 0.5 denier or less, thus meeting the claim limitations. The prior art further teaches microfine fiber bundles (B) comprising inelastic polymer fibers. See Abstract. The fiber bundles (B) are analogous to the claimed microfine fiber bundle (B). The fibers of the prior art bundles (B) have a fineness of 0.2 denier, which meets the limitation of claim 1, requiring fibers of the (B) bundle having a fineness of 0.5 dtex or less. Regarding the claimed blending ratio, the prior art teaches a blending ratio A/B of 10/90 to 60/40, thus overlapping the claimed blending ratio. Furthermore, the reference teaches (col. 9, lines 17+) impregnation with an elastomeric polymer, as required by claim 1. Thus, the limitations of claim 1 are met by the prior art under 35 USC 102(e).

6. Regarding claim 2, the prior art describes the elastomeric microfine fibers of bundle (A) agglutinating, thus meeting the claim limitations (col. 2, lines 56+).

7. Regarding claim 4, the leather-like sheet is napped to provide a suede-like surface (col. 10, lines 13+). The structural limitations of claim 5 are met by the napping process used to produce the suede-like material. It is understood that the suede-like

material meets the structural limitations of the claim. Regarding claim 6, a grained leather-like material is disclosed (col. 10, lines 9, 43).

Allowable Subject Matter

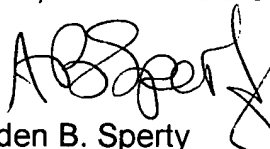
8. Claim 3 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The prior art does not appear to teach or fairly suggest a powder between microfine fibers of the (A) bundles.

Conclusion

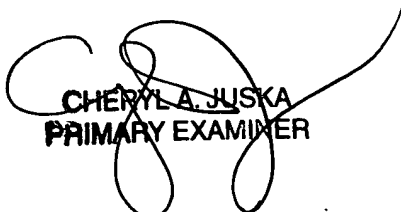
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Arden B. Sperty whose telephone number is (571)272-1543. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th, 08:00-16:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on (571)272-1478. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Arden B. Sperty
Examiner
Art Unit 1771

May 12, 2006


CHERYL A. JUSKA
PRIMARY EXAMINER